

A MODERN GOLOK TIBETAN FAMILY HISTORY

Gangs phrug

NOTICE

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Gangs phrug

A Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).




Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-5-10-17-07
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst | 1838/1938

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INTRODUCTION

y honored ancestors lived in groups of about sixty families before the Land Reform movement in 1950. They were relatives who were part of a single tribe and shared one piece of grassland. This tribe also had a name and a respected leader. Great Grandmother belonged to the Gorpa Tribe that, after Land Reform, was assigned to Yartang Village, Pema County, Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tsongon Province, China.

Many Tibetans avoid mentioning a dead person's name. If someone has the same name as a dead man, he might change it to show respect to the deceased's family. I have changed the names of the people and some places in this story for that reason, and for other reasons the discerning reader will understand. Dates are approximate.

I give a true account of my family over four generations and, in doing so, describe certain hardships during my grandparents' early lives.

Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-15-48:13
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst | 1039/1039

1

CHARACTERS

Tsongon (1903-1965), Father's mother's mother's was from the Gorpa Tribe. Her husband was from the Lamkor Tribe. Tsongon had four children. Two are still alive, including Father's mother.

Lhamo (b. 1930), Tsongon's first child and Father's mother, married Wangpo (b. 1936), my grandfather. They had seven children (five sons and two daughters), including Father. Lhamo was a single mother of two sons when she married Grandfather.

Jamyang (1934-1962), Tsongon's second child and first son, married a woman from his own tribe. They had three sons. During the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), he was arrested and died in Nagormo Prison, near Ziling¹ City.

¹ Ziling (Xining) is the capital of Tsongon (Qinghai) Province.

Gangtso (b. 1935), Tsongon's third child and second daughter, married Wangchuk (1929-1977) who had been arrested at the same time as Uncle Jamyang. Gangtso had three children - all daughters. She divorced after her husband returned from five years of incarceration, and never remarried.

Sungrap (1942-2012), Tsongon's last child, the youngest son, eventually became the headmaster of the Tibetan Junior Middle School in Pema County. He married a woman from the county town and had three girls and a boy. Unfortunately, he passed away while I was writing this story.

Jampa (b. 1952), Lhamo's first son, became a great monk. It is said that his father was a well-known *chopa* - an adept with the power to exorcise demons that harm humans.

Sanggyam (b. 1954), Lhamo's second son, married his Uncle Jamyang's wife as a family duty. They then had their only child who died while delivering her own child. Sanggyam's father was from the Yesang Tribe.

Wangpo (b. 1936), Father's father, was from the Ngangba Tribe. He married Grandmother, Lhamo, during the hardest time. Wangpo had two brothers - Kome (1930-1978) and Rapgye (b. 1938). Wangpo's only sister married a man from the distant Yorpo Tribe.

Sungre (b. 1969), Lhamo's fifth child and her first daughter, married a man from her own community.

Karkho (b. 1975), Lhamo's second and youngest daughter, married a young well-known descendant of a great mahāsiddha. They divorced after their first child was born. Karkho then lived with her parents and remains unmarried.

Gyeltsen (b. 1956), Lhamo and Wangpo's first child, married Wangmo from his own tribe. They divorced after twenty years of marriage. Gyeltsen then married a widow from another community.

Gupe (b. 1964), Lhamo's sixth son, married a woman from another village and divorced after two years. He was Uncle Gyeltsen's wife's secret lover and now lives with her.

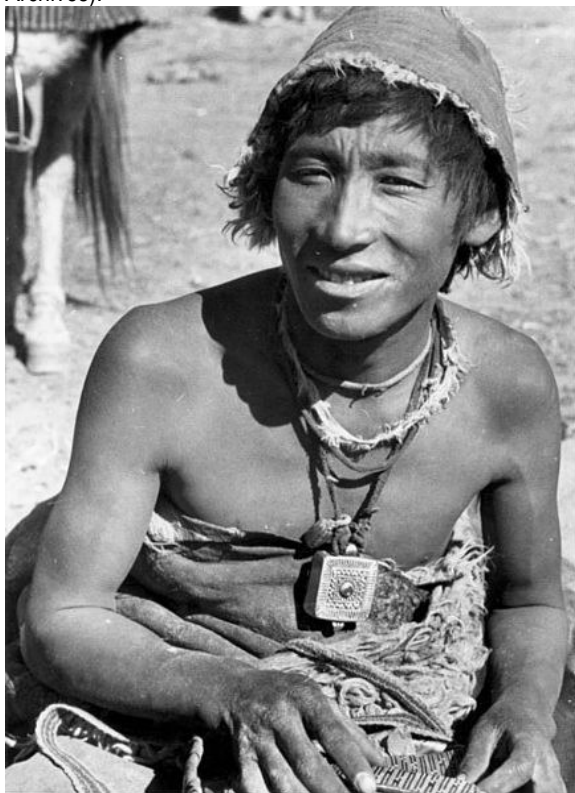
Sanggye (b. 1960), Lhamo's fourth son and my father, became a teacher and married Mother in 1985. His childhood name was Jasha.

Golok residents, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-15-40-19
Foto: o. Ang. | 11/28/1939

Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundestarchiv, Bild 135 S-10-17-15
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst | 1938/1939

2

GRANDMOTHER'S FAMILY

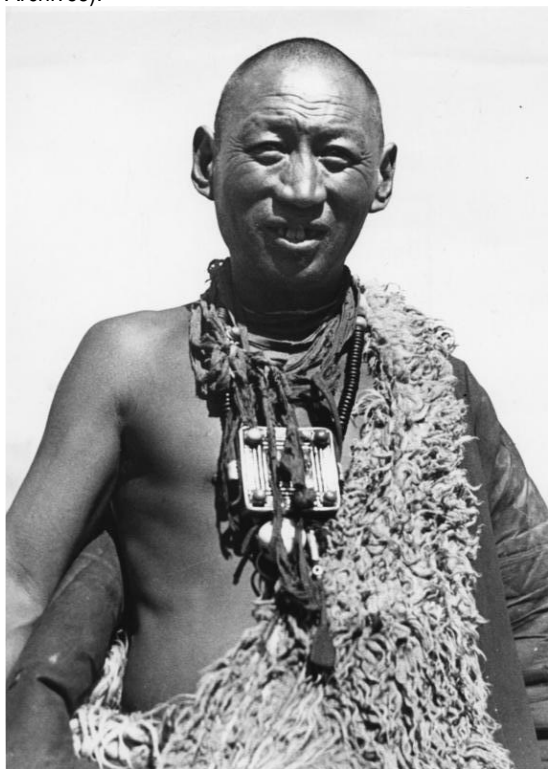


y father's mother's mother (1903-1965), married a man from the nearby Lamkor Tribe when she was in her early twenties, or in about 1926. The marriage was arranged by her parents. Over time, she delivered two sons and two daughters, establishing an intimate, warm family. Life was full of pleasure and joy, though she and her husband encountered many challenges in rearing their children and caring for their livestock. They owned approximately fifty cows and yaks, and a hundred sheep.

They had great freedom to do what they liked, and their belief that Buddhism was sacred and wonderful gave them a deep sense of security. They felt no fear of death for they were secure in the belief that they would be reborn. All Tsongon's family members had unshakeable belief in their

religion, and received good merit from performing religious rituals that were an integral part of their daily life.

Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Federative, Bild 13, 5.10.1938
Fotograf: Ernst Schäfer, Bild 11.03.1938

Tsongon's husband was kind to Tsongon and helped her, reducing her workload. Family chores commonly fall on a woman's shoulders, and she was fortunate to have a considerate husband who often assisted her. He also herded the livestock, gathered hair from yaks and wool from sheep, and did other chores that other males in his tribe rarely performed.

Tsongon was mainly responsible for milking, cooking, caring for the children, chanting the Six Sacred Syllables, and counting her sandalwood prayer beads. Rearing four children is not easy for a mother, and this was hard for Tsongon because she was often ill. She had great pain in her abdomen occasionally, and her right leg frequently went numb, limiting her mobility.

Tsongon had four children of whom two survived. In the second year of her marriage, she gave birth to her first child, who is my grandmother (Lhamo, b. 1930), who experienced extreme difficulties. Tsongon's first son, Jamyang (1934-1962), remained at home to continue the family line. However, during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), he was arrested

and taken to Nagormo Prison, near Ziling City where he died.

Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 105-S-10.5-27.20
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst 11836/1938

Gangtso is Tsongon's third child. She married Wangchuk from the same community when she was nineteen and lived with him. He had been in the same jail with Uncle Jamyang. They had three children (all daughters) before Gangtso's husband was jailed. I have no idea why this couple divorced after Wangchuk returned from five years of incarceration. Aunt Gangtso never remarried and delivered two fatherless children. One of these children, Aunt Drolma, currently lives with her in the County Town.

Grandmother said:

In 1942, my mother [Tsongon], nearly died while delivering her last child. Her religious practice and her collected merit from her previous and present lives allowed her to escape death. To continue the family tradition of having a monk among their men, my parents wanted their last son, Sungrap, to be a monk. However, when he was a child, there were no monasteries near us, and nobody was available who could teach him how to chant, or even the Tibetan alphabet.

When he had an opportunity to study with a great lama in another tribe about a four hour walk from our home place, life played a cruel joke on my pitiful brother in the

form of a great famine that lasted from 1958 to 1961. This was the most difficult time we ever experienced.

After policies changed, he got a chance to study, but not in a monastery. A small school was established after the nearest tribes were forced to send their children to study. Eight-year-old Sungrap was no exception. He studied in this school for a couple of years and, to the glory of his family and himself became, in time, the first local teacher of that small school. Eventually he was promoted to be the headmaster of the Tibetan Junior Middle School of Pema County. He moved there with his newly established family of six, and thus never became a monk. He retired after twenty years of devotion to the education of the younger generations.

While he was the headmaster, he cooperated with a Han businessman and managed a big shop. He became very successful. He then opened a small pharmacy with the assistance of his youngest daughter, who was a well-known doctor working in the local official hospital. All his four children got formal jobs,

married, and lived in tranquility and happiness.

Sadly, good things often last for only a short time. To everyone's shock, Uncle Sungrap died in July 2012, as I was writing this story.

Now, let's return to the past. Grandmother and her family lived in peaceful happiness without fear and famine. When I asked her about adversity and conflict at that time, she answered:


The strongest conflict people were wary of was conflict over grassland between tribes. However, compared to what happened from 1958 to 1963, it's not worth mentioning. I experienced a terrible change from having a good life with my family, to the troubled times of the 1950s, and on into the 1970s. During that period, we lost our personal assets, experienced horrendous famine, our religious symbols and local religious sites were destroyed, and many of our loved ones died, before there was finally a return to a comfortable life. How true our sacred Buddhist scriptures are when they speak of impermanence!

Butsang Ngolok chief's wife wearing hair ornaments of cloth, amber, turquoise, and silver at Radja Gomba. (JF Rock, <http://arboretum.harvard.edu/>).



3

GRANDMOTHER

randmother (Lhamo) was born in 1930 into Tsongon's family. As I have already mentioned, she was the first child. She spent a pleasant childhood in a peaceful, warm environment without worry of external threats. Their tribe had forty to fifty households. Grandmother's family was well-known and relatively wealthy. On account of her father's hard work and skillful herding, their living conditions improved with each passing day. Her mother stayed at home milling *tsampa* 'roasted barley flour', drying cheese, boiling kettles of tea, sewing, cleaning, and caring for the children.

Grandmother said:

It is shameful and disrespectful to have no hot tea to offer when a guest visits your home. Consequently, my mother always kept a pot of black tea, but with improvement in our condition, she could also offer milk.

I played various games, listened to many different folk stories and riddles from elders, and sang. As I got older, much of the housework became my responsibility, because my mother's right leg was frequently painful. This worried Father, who occasionally returned home to see if Mother was well, using the excuse that he was hungry from a long period of herding in the mountains.

Moving is the most pleasant thing I recall from my childhood. We moved at least twice a year, generally in summer and again in winter, not because we liked moving, but because of the limited grass for our livestock. It was enjoyable to move, but it was difficult for adults. They prepared for a couple of days and then the actual move took one or two days. For children, it was a joyful time of adventure. My oldest brother, Jamyang, who was born when I was four years old, and I were each put in a basket and tied on either side of a gentle yak among our herds that was then led or driven by our parents who were commonly on foot.

Time passed and Grandmother reached marriageable age. Her parents searched for a good husband through a matchmaker and decided to arrange a marriage. However, Grandmother delivered a son at her home before the marriage. The

upcoming marriage was then canceled by the groom's family. I didn't inquire much about this boy's biological father, but village rumor say he is the son of a great *chopa*. These men practice divination, chant, and engage in deep meditation. They are not monks who live in monasteries and may establish a family if they like. At first, I considered this a rumor, but now I am convinced it is true, because this boy later became a respected lama in our village monastery for most of his lifetime. Life was peaceful and secure.

Grandmother's first brother grew older, married, and the bride moved into his home. After Grandmother gave birth to another fatherless boy, her parents pitched a separate tent and gave her livestock and property.

Grandmother's misfortune and suffering were just beginning.

In 1958, when Grandmother's second son had just learned to walk, armed Chinese soldiers interrupted the peaceful life she enjoyed. Many Tibetans from nearby tribes were herded by soldiers to Grandmother's home place. These Jiefang soldiers 'Liberation Army' came so abruptly

that tribe members didn't even have time to take a single breath. This was during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960).

Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-16-48-23
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst (1938/1939)

Grandmother said:

I never understood why they launched that movement. What I know is that they destroyed our warm family and tranquil life. They made a huge camp and set up a People's Commune. Individual household property was collected, which then belonged to the commune.

All the locals lived in a huge black tent as a large family. We pooled all our food, and thus there was enough food in the first few months. We ate from the same big pot. Importantly, people no longer saved food and no one in authority was concerned that our limited supplies were running out. Farming began, despite no history or scientific basis for agriculture locally. People were forced to plow. Barley and wheat seed they had pooled were planted rather than milled. All was in vain and the seeds that sprouted did not mature. The nationwide famine of 1959-1961 ensued. People died of starvation every day. Locals could only eat wild plants near the mountain. *Ashogkhashog*, *relba*, *migentranggo*, and *dumbusumtse* were boiled, sometimes with rodent or rabbit flesh. There was very little of this, however, when the season changed. Starvation sent people to the Lord of Death everyday.

I worried about my two little sons whenever I breathed. I felt they would starve

to death. I obediently worked like I was possessed. When darkness came, I slipped out from under the big tent to see if I could find something for my boys to eat. Despite hunger, weakness, and illness, I never rested for even as much as one day during that time. If I didn't go to work I wouldn't get *zayik* 'food coupons' and work points.

People got points and food coupons for their labor. "The more work you do, the more food you get. The less work you do, the fewer points you get. Doing nothing means you get nothing." These three slogans became our labor mantra, which we were taught to sing while working in the fields.

Though we sang these slogans while working with shovels and spades, we knew they were lies. Actually, more labor was rewarded with a minimum amount of food, less work meant more lashes from whips, and doing nothing meant death.

I was the major labor force in my home, therefore, I had few work points to feed three mouths.

Commune officials collected all the livestock and ordered one family to manage them and provide dairy products. Consequently, this family suffered less than others for they could steal milk. Later, I and three other women were assigned to milk with this family. I welcomed this assignment, which was probably given to me because I worked hard for the commune. This saved

three lives. I stole milk for my sons and sometimes for my parents and brother.

During the second year of the starving times, Wangpo (b. 1936) moved into my home and lived with me and my two sons. We didn't announce the marriage to others, much less hold a wedding. We ignored such things because we were all struggling to stay alive.

The period of famine gradually ended and livestock and land were eventually assigned to survivors based on family number. Two people got one cow. My family received two yak-cow crosses and a piece of pasture. Everyone then began struggling for a new beginning.

I thought that the most horrendous events were over, but there were more. The ghastly famine was followed by the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976]. Religious images, scripture chanting, prayer beads, small metal stupas, and anything related to the old culture, particularly religion, were burned, destroyed, forbidden, or confiscated.

This was not physical torture as in the previous years - it was mental suffering. Government employees played a leading role in banning religious practice and destroying and confiscating religious items. Our tent poles were pasted with white paper inscribed with Chinese characters that I couldn't understand. People were taught to acknowledge the benefits brought by new socialist society, and were told how practicing

religion was superstition, and why it was prohibited.

Of course, I secretly chanted and practiced religion. I chanted every night in my bed. To be honest, I dared not do formal religious rituals at home, but the strong belief in my heart was never shaken. Every night I chanted the Six Sacred Syllables and scriptures that I had memorized.

A local brave, clever woman dared oppose them. After her parents and her husband died during the famine, she was utterly devoted to religion. Everybody said she was great, and very compassionate. She often prostrated to an image of Padmasambhava [who first preached Buddhism to Tibetans].

For many years, his picture hung on a pole in her tent. When the Cultural Revolution was launched, it was confiscated by a government worker. The next day, the place where she had hung that sacred image was occupied by a statue of Chairman Mao. Her routine did not change and she prostrated to this statue. Villagers learned this and disdained her by calling her a renegade, devil, ghost, and other dirty

I dared not do formal religious rituals at home, but the strong belief in my heart was never shaken. Every night I chanted the Six Sacred Syllables and scriptures that I had memorized.

words. After some months, she died. The Mao image still hung on the pole.

Government employees and some villagers went to her tent to confiscate her meager property. The person who removed the statue from the pole found another image behind it - an image of Padmasambhava. People were astonished and then realized that she was prostrating to her sacred Buddha, not Chairman Mao, and felt guilty for having stained her reputation.

Belief is from your heart. It is not based on religious implements. You may destroy every physical thing that I have related to religion, but my strong faith in Buddhism will never lessen, not even a little bit.

The overall political climate changed after some years and there was more religious freedom. My grandparents had their own children. Grandmother gave birth to seven children (five sons and two daughters) after the end of the nation-wide famine and the Cultural Revolution. She regained a peaceful life that had vanished for almost a decade. In 2012 she lived with Grandfather and their third son.

4

GRANDUNCLE

As I mentioned, Grandmother had two brothers of whom the oldest died in prison. For Grandmother's parents, the death of their son was a miserable uncertainty that they never learned much about. All they knew was that their son had not returned home with others. Grandmother said:

One afternoon five years after my brother and many others were captured and taken away, men who were my brother's companions in jail returned home. Villagers were delighted. Because Brother Jamyang did not return, my family began investigating. We were depressed because we were told that he was dead, but given no clear explanation as to how he had died. Various versions of his death swirled in the local community - he died of starvation, he died on the way to prison, he committed suicide... We weren't sure, but accepted that he was dead. All we

could do was conduct religious rituals in the hope that he would have a good rebirth.

SOCHO DESCRIBES JAMYANG

To better tell this story, I must introduce another man from our village, Socho (b. 1932), my maternal grandmother's cousin. He lived in my home area in 2012. Only he could explain Granduncle's death because he was one of the men jailed in 1958:

During the Land Reform Movement in 1953, land was classified into sections. Each section had a work space where two or three buildings made of earth and stones mixed with yak dung were put up. Several officials worked there. There were three to six sections. We called our section Yartang and established a work space in the lower part of Pelung, a small, narrow valley.

One day, many soldiers came to the Moba section from South Drokde, another section. Workers in the Moba section escaped to our place, and said many bandits had come and burned all their work rooms. Learning this, most officials in our section fled to the Dogongma section. Two days later, soldiers arrived and detained all the monks, rich people, able-bodied men, and those with power or status.

Your granduncle was arrested because he was relatively well-off. They also detained me because I was a monk. They gathered all the monks in our section and said that we would study together in preparation for a huge congress. At the meeting, they argued with us about religion and urged us to not believe in *cho* 'religion'.

It was at that meeting that they detained all the monks. I was also arrested. More than one hundred men from our section were seized and forced to work in Dulung Valley for a dozen days. We cut small bushes and dug dirt to build huts. We were not allowed to go far from the valley. Soldiers holding horsewhips and with guns on their backs and in their belts surrounded us.

After several days, we were driven to Drukchen Monastery, which is now located in Drukchen Township, Pema County. About 300 of us, including the monastery abbot, were held in the biggest temple. We could hardly move because we were so tightly packed together. All the windows and doors were sealed. No women and children were among us. The room was so dark that we couldn't see the face of the man sitting in front of us. We stayed like that for more than a month. They let us out once a day at noon to go to the toilet. Those with diarrhea were ignored and had to suffer where they sat. Many of us became faint or fell when we left that gloomy room when sunshine suddenly

struck our eyes. I would have done the hardest work outside rather than stay in that cold, dark prison where we had, in the past, prostrated respectfully to our holy Buddha.

Unfortunately, there was no work for us to do. For about half a month we suffered in that dark jail. Eventually, we were moved to Pema and assigned work similar to what we had done in Dulung Valley. However, the workload was different. We had to work day and night on a nearly empty stomach. We leveled small hills, and transported the soil to the place where small huts were to be built. There was so much work that I didn't sleep well for even a single night.

This was not the end of our torment. Another group of Chinese soldiers from Ziling arrived after we had worked there for about three months. We saw lines of soldiers approaching in the distance. They were so many that even the fresh air above them was contaminated by the dust from their marching. Their skin was tanned as dark as the black clouds before a severe thunderstorm. Two soldiers went past us while the others stood still, smiling at those who were supervising us and showing us black faces. The two soldiers went to a cottage where the ranking leader, a middle-aged Chinese man, stayed. The others soldiers stayed outside and waited.

We were awakened early the next morning. A dozen captives were bound

together with a long thick rope. A big knot was made between a half dozen men in order to count them easily. We were forced to walk between two lines of soldiers. About 700 prisoners began walking to Darlak, where the Golok Prefecture capital was then located. None of the prisoners had the courage to resist, though they outnumbered their captors three to one. Our enemies had guns and we were tightly tied.

Your granduncle and I got to know each other at that time, since he was bound just in front of me. Jamyang was clever and brave. We soon became close friends. Sometimes we were shocked by the sound of gunfire. He said that fat and old people who could not keep up were executed as the rest of us marched over hills and across valleys.

We rested very late and continued marching early the next day. After a couple of days we reached our destination with fewer than 600 captives. More than a hundred had died on the way. Though we were unsure how they had died, we were aware of the terrible gunshots, the miserable screams of victims, and our diminishing numbers. We found more soldiers and prisoners in Darlak. I thought we would rest for several days and then start work there, but we stayed there only one night and set out again the next evening.

This time, old military trucks were used to move us. They squeezed forty of us in

the back of one truck. We stood on our feet and they locked the sides of the truck. Two soldiers stood at both front corners. They beat us with whips, commanding us to sit. Hours later my legs and hands were numb. I couldn't breathe normally because of the crush. Sitting beside me, Jamyang tried to move and stand, as though he was aware of my problem, and then two whips lashed his back. That surely hurt a lot and I felt guilty.

Time ticked by on that zigzagging road. My right leg was so numb that I couldn't feel it at all. On account of the light from the mid-month moon, it was not very dark outside as well as inside the truck. The two guards could thus easily detect any unusual movements. Your granduncle and I were near the back corner and he pretended to sleep after the painful lashes to his back.

A terrible plan formed in his mind, and he suddenly jumped out of the truck. His face hit the ground. The two guards didn't notice. Unfortunately, the driver saw this in his rearview mirror and stopped the truck. The driver got out, and then the two guards followed. They rushed to Jamyang. He didn't run because he knew that, if he did, they would shoot him. They beat him with all their strength, using their fists and feet. When they tired they used their whips and lashed him. After this punishment, they shouted at us, indicating this was an example to anyone who tried to escape or protest. Jamyang's

body was bloody and badly swollen. They tied him to an outside part of the truck the whole night. I was terribly frightened and didn't look at his injured body.

Two days later, Jamyang was untied. We reached Ziling around midday on the third day. Our truck stopped in the middle of a huge plain surrounded by both small and huge mountains. Solders lashed us from behind, ordering us to get out of the truck. Their voices were sharper than before. I stood up little by little, jumped lightly from the truck, and fell on the ground newly paved with soil.

I was astonished that the pain on my numb leg had suddenly disappeared, but a frightened look emerged on my face at the sight of thousands of prisoners in black uniforms working ceaselessly on both sides of the mountains. From the flat ground where I was, looking at the opposite slopes, I saw prisoners walking hurriedly up and down with sacks of soil on their backs. The huge numbers of prisoners resembled herds of black yaks chased by wolves. They were hauling soil from the mountains into the valleys to level the earth and build houses.

They soon took us into a big yard where we were given hot water and a little barley flour. When we finished eating, they gave black clothing to each of us. My clothes were too big while Jamyang's were too small, so we exchanged. As soon as we changed they drove us to the biggest slope where

more workers were needed. Only one day was needed to fill up a long, wide valley with soil if there was no rain and the number of workers was constant.

On average, seventy people died each day. The corpses were carried to the top of a big mountain where an enormous grotto had been dug deep into the peak of the mountain just for corpses. The only task of four people was carrying corpses up the mountain peak and throwing them into that hole, which was deep enough to contain thousands of corpses. After the hole was filled and covered with dirt, they dug another deep hole for the same purpose. We worked and worked, and the flat plain became vaster and vaster.

In the middle of the wide plain, there were many cottages in sequence, built of concrete, mud, or wood. One day, we were ordered to build a big square yard. We had to comply, otherwise many of us would die. Due to the huge numbers of workers and our effort, a yard nearly the size of a football field was completed within ten days. To our surprise, all the prisoners were kept in this yard at night. We had built a prison with walls about three meters high for ourselves. How ridiculous!

After half a year of working there, despite being fed very little and ordered to do much work, I felt stronger, not because the work was less, but because we had learned

to use as little energy as possible in our daily work.

New Year's Day approached. We had been in Ziling for more than half a year by that time. Before New Year's Day we started moving again to Tsadram, which was not far from Nagormo. There was no exact name for this place when we arrived, so we called it Tsadram, meaning the 'border of heat' because it was absolutely roasting there, and of course we greatly suffered.

Most of us were minorities - Mongolians, Salar, and Tibetans who were from different places in Tsongon. About thirty percent were Han captured during the Revolution in Anhui, Jiangsu, and Chongqing. We reached Tsadram one afternoon on foot followed by armed soldiers. The weather was very hot, dry, and dusty. We could hardly get even a mouthful of water. During the daytime, we were ordered to dig wells. We dug a hole three meters deep and two meters in diameter but, finding no water, we filled it in, and went elsewhere to try. At night, they kept us inside a rectangular area fenced by thorn-bushes that we had collected from nearby hills. Many men were shot to death during failed escape attempts.

"It is good that Jamyang wasn't with us," I thought when terrible shooting rang out every night. "He would surely have tried to escape if he were here." Jamyang and I were not together at night when we were ordered

to march to that dry place. The soldiers drove some of us out from the prison and led us there. Fortunately, Jamyang avoided this.

I can never forget the horrible hardships in that wretched, hopeless place. Even now, I feel mournful when someone even mentions that place. Many of us, including a few soldiers, died of thirst and exhaustion. They forced us to throw the corpses into newly dug, dry wells. Some died while digging the wells and then were buried in the wells that they had dug themselves - their own graves. Several months passed with us struggling in that deadly desert. I somehow remained alive, despite dreadful thirst, very little food, hard work, and the heat.

After both soldiers and officials realized it was impossible to find water there, they drove us back to Nagormo. Jamyang and other prisoners who were working in Ziling had been moved to a new prison that was much bigger and more secure than what we'd built in Ziling before leaving for Tsadram. Both Jamyang and I were pleased to meet again, though it was in an awful prison. He told me stories about what had happened after my departure and I did the same. We were together most of the time the following nights.

Then the day came when he told me his plan to escape and asked me to go with him. I refused, not because I didn't want to

leave, but because I was terrified of the rifle-toting guards who ceaselessly kept watch. That night, Jamyang and another man decided to escape at midnight. They were familiar with the area and were also very careful while making their plans. Jamyang told me their plan and outlined their route so I could flee too, if they were successful. I was in my cell at midnight praying constantly for them, hoping they would escape detection. They left. Half an hour passed. It was utterly quiet. My heart pounded and my legs trembled. Suddenly, "Bang! Bang!" rang out simultaneously, awakening all the prisoners. I was terrified and could not sleep. My mind was full of concern for Jamyang and his friend.

Everything was calm the next day, as though nothing had happened. The prisoners dared not mention the two gunshots. That afternoon while working outside the prison, we observed four prisoners carrying two long sacks. I asked one of the prisoners what they would do.

"Two soldiers ordered us to bury them nearby," he replied.

When I asked to replace him, he agreed because it was not an easy job. Two soldiers shouted at us from behind as we talked. I took the corner of one sack from the man and continued on with the other three men. We reached the bottom of a small valley where the soldiers could see us.

The soldiers were watching us so we had to be careful. We put the two sacks gently on the ground, and dug two deep holes as long as the sacks. As we dug deeper and deeper, we were getting further and further away from the soldiers' line of sight because we were in the graves. However, my concern was totally focused on what was inside the two sacks. Two of us dug one hole. It took hours because the earth was very hard and rocky. When we finished digging, we picked up the sacks to put them in the holes. This was my only opportunity to look inside. I summoned my courage and peeped through a small hole when the sack was in the bottom of the deep grave.

Oh! My Three Jewels! It was Jamyang! I was absolutely sure because I saw the scars on his back that I had seen many times before. Those scars were from wounds the soldiers had made with their whips after he failed in his first escape attempt from the truck. I also saw a bullet hole in his back, which proved he had been shot from behind. I didn't know what to do. I turned his body over so he faced the sky. The other man pulled me up out of the grave. Fortunately, the soldiers in the distance did not notice me jumping in and out. I was not interested in looking inside the other sack. I was sure it was Jamyang's friend. We filled the graves and made mounds on top with stones and soil.

Jamyang's death so terrified me that I never dared unwrap the paper he left that showed their escape. I became lonely but I also became a little stronger, because I thought I had experienced the most horrible things in life.

Jamyang was very intelligent and valorous but he lacked patience. Three years after his death, all Tibetan prisoners in that jail were released when a new policy called Eighty Clauses was implemented.

None of us had been sentenced to more than ten years. This new policy was great news for Tibetan prisoners. I don't know why this policy was launched so suddenly. I also had no idea why only Tibetans in the prison were released. I could hardly believe the officers and soldiers were the same men who had captured us years before. Two or three officers accompanied us back to Pema County, our home place.

First, we went to Chengdu City by train from Ziling. It was my first time on a train. I enjoyed it but remained suspicious of the officers. They had pistols in their belts, but this time their weapons were intended to defend themselves and us. We were offered good food, nice accommodation, and decent clothes when we reached Chengdu City. The next day, we were sent to Pema in a military truck as big as the one in which we had been packed into five years earlier. I spent two days in the truck and did not feel cramped

nor were my limbs numb. We drove by rivers and through the mountains.

We passed through Barkham, Ngawa, and other places that I can't identify. The nearer we got to Pema, the safer we felt. We reached Pema County Town three days later.

I didn't stay in Pema, where the great changes shocked me. I continued to Yartang, my home place, which I reached in the afternoon of the next day. I had been away for five years. To my surprise, I saw buildings made of earth and stones. Some families were camped nearby, living in their black tents.

"My friend, Jamyang often mentioned his three sons and his wife," Uncle Socho said. "Perhaps it was because he cared about his family so much that he chose to escape from jail. He never complained about hard work, but he talked about his family everyday."

I learned afterwards that those buildings had been made by locals and were for the commune. The nationwide famine had tapered off and land and livestock were distributed among the locals. I became the commune accountant two years after I returned.

At this point, the mystery of Granduncle's death was solved, and now I will continue my narrative.

After Granduncle was arrested, his family had awful difficulty. His wife had delivered three sons before misfortune befell Jamyang. Two sons were still none too steady on their feet. Fortunately, the oldest was old enough to help his pitiful mother fetch water, herd calves near the mountains, and do other light chores. Caring for three children for a single mother was a great challenge, especially during such difficult times. Consequently, after Granduncle's relatives confirmed that he would never return, they asked Grandmother's first son to live with Jamyang's widow and her sons.

Uncle Sanggyam then married Jamyang's (his own uncle's) wife. They eventually had a daughter of their own, who died of dystocia when she was twenty-two while delivering her first child. By this time, Granduncle's three sons had all found wives, established their own families in the community, and enjoyed good living conditions.

5

GRANDFATHER AND HIS FAMILY



n 1934, Grandfather was born in his *payul* 'father's hometown' in Pema County, as the second child. He had two brothers and a sister of whom only one was still alive in 2014. He belonged to the large Ngangba Tribe, which had plenty of food and pastureland. Grandfather's parents were extremely careful in their herding, but the large number of family members didn't permit the family to become wealthy. In summer, they saved dairy products and dung that they obtained from dozens of yaks, which were barely enough for Grandfather's family to live a warm, food-secure and fuel-secure life through the winter. Life was hard for this family.

GRANDFATHER'S ONLY SISTER

Grandfather's only sister was two years younger than he. She married a man from the distant Yorpo Tribe and moved to her husband's home there. Grandmother said:

She returned to her natal home once a year with her husband during the New Year period. This was the happiest time of year. In the second year of her marriage, she brought her first daughter and visited her parents who were now elderly. We never imagined this would be her last time she would see her parents and siblings. She died of starvation and exhaustion from hard work during the terrible famine. Her death also claimed an unborn baby, which was found dead in her womb when her body was offered to vultures.

KOME: GRANDFATHER'S OLDEST BROTHER

Kome (1930-1978), Grandfather's oldest brother, was chosen to stay at home to inherit the family's name and property. He then married and cared for his parents. Grandfather's parents considered Kome's wife to be a virtuous daughter-in-law. She

never complained about bad treatment and hard work. It is a challenge for a local Tibetan woman to be a daughter-in-law, do all the family chores, and care for her husband's parents. Quarrels between parents and daughters-in-law sometimes result in divorce.

At first, Grandfather's parents didn't criticize Kome's wife because she did not give birth. However, their desire for a grandchild destroyed the good sentiment between their daughter-in-law and themselves, and they tried to persuade their son to divorce. They were shocked when Kome and his wife fled far away and never returned. Before he left, he urged his youngest brother, Rapgye (b. 1938), to take good care of their parents.

At that time, Kome's father was in his mid-sixties and his mother was nearly seventy. They decided to place all their hope on Grandfather after their oldest son unexpectedly left. They thought that Grandfather was the oldest of the remaining children and capable of leading the family. Furthermore, according to local custom, he should replace his brother, regardless of his

own idea. Grandfather, however, had other ideas.

GRANDFATHER DOES AS HE LIKES

Unlike local men controlled by custom and rules, Grandfather wanted to do what he liked. He was not unfilial. He took responsibility for this family and was concerned about his aged parents. He stayed at home and remained unmarried, unsettling his parents. Having an unmarried son who would not continue the family line was absolutely not what Grandfather's parents wanted. They arranged marriages for him time after time and were frustrated by his persistent refusal to marry. They twice received proposals from rich families who had good reputations wanting Grandfather to move to their home as a groom for their daughter. Grandfather refused politely, thinking he should follow his heart, and stay at home. These families understood how kind Grandfather's was to his parents, which is why they wanted Grandfather as a son-in-law.

GRANDFATHER'S YOUNGER BROTHER MARRIES

The second year after Kome's departure, his youngest brother married and the new bride moved into his home. Grandfather's parents were very pleased, thinking this brought good luck and much hope to this family without young children. The bride also took on much of the work for the family. Before this, most family work was regarded as women's duty and was all done by Grandfather's mother, who was the only woman in the home at the time. As she grew older, Grandfather was responsible for the hard work his mother couldn't finish. The new bride, Tsomo, was very adept, kind-hearted, never lazy, and as steadfast as a precious jewel that never changes color.

Rapgye thus took the burden of this family on his shoulders, and fulfilled his parents' wish to have a grandchild. His parents understood that Rapgye's wife was surely as good as Kome's. She treated them as her own parents, but they never forgot their absent son, whom they hated for leaving them, but also loved because he was their first-born. Kome's departure

without saying goodbye was an unhappiness that lasted the rest of their lives. They longed to meet him again - a dream that was never realized.

GRANDFATHER DEFIANTLY MARRIES GRANDMOTHER

In time, Grandfather got to know Grandmother, who was a single mother of two sons and lived apart from her parents. Secretly, they fell madly in love and became a family. During the most difficult times, Grandfather knew that Grandmother and her sons suffered from hunger. Understanding that she could no longer feed her sons, he openly moved to Grandmother's home. His sudden move exasperated his disappointed parents, who strongly objected to their son living with an unmarried woman who already had two sons.

When I asked, Grandfather told me more:

Father never rebuked me before, but he seriously scolded me over this and vowed to the deities that he would never speak to me if I insisted on living with your grandmother. I

chose to be with your grandmother. It was the result of my inflexible love and compassion. I knew my brother would perfectly support the family, which was also the wish of our absent older brother. I thus left home a condemned man. My selfish determination and disobedience hurt Father's weak heart, which I had supposed was very strong. He and Mother were disappointed and very grieved.

"Did you ever try to apologize? Perhaps, you could have paid *nachak*, for his oath," I asked, knowing the answer was negative but I wondered why. Local custom says that when a person swears never to speak to someone, the other person or his relations may practice *nachak* to ask him to forgive the offender and be released from his vow. This involves offering fresh food to deities, releasing one of the family's livestock, and chanting scriptures that are repeated when we commit a sin or when we feel guilty. The more times you chant, the more sins you eliminate.

Grandfather and I were silent for a while, and then he continued:

No, my relatives suggested many times that I beg his forgiveness before he passed away

but I refused, not because I didn't want his forgiveness but because I thought it would have been a terrible sin for him to break his vow. I was always fully aware of his love for me. His permanent vow and vicious words never altered his love in our father-son relationship. On the contrary, our love became deeper and stronger. After I left home, he sent Mother to see me every other day with clothes, food, and other things that I could not buy because of my own family's poverty.

One winter, one of my stepsons got the flu and nearly died. It was Father who sent medicinal herbs and two cows for us to milk. I immediately realized it was Father's order when Mother came with these things, which also signaled how much I owe him my present life. I loved him for his generosity. He saved Sanggyam, who was not even his own blood grandson. This was one of the reasons why I had left him. Why should he help this child? It was very kind of him. However, the unexpected often happens. Father died the year Lhamo gave birth to our first child, a son. My strong desire to shout Father's name burned in my heart as that worst thing happened, which made me feel terribly alone for the first time, but it was then too late.

I have no regrets about my father. I did what I thought was right. I could not do anything for him.

Our most difficult times were during the famine years. I somehow avoided being incarcerated with other young men, and worked for the commune. I joined your grandmother's family and saved her two sons from the agony of starvation. Before that, her daily food rations were not enough for the three of them but afterwards with my help, we lived without fear of starvation.

We lived in a small tent community. Our individual tents were firstly pitched together in lines like detached houses in the cities. Cross-paths were thus formed. After family property was confiscated by the commune, we were no longer interested in making that big family become rich, but how to get more food and profit for ourselves. None of us realized that a great disaster was imminent.

Work at that time was twice as hard as today. We divided into two groups - Karkhang and Zhingle 'agriculture group'. Most Karkhang members were women who herded livestock, milked, and made butter, cheese, and yogurt. This was great for women because they could steal milk products for their relatives. Working for the Zhingle

'agriculture' group was regarded as Hell. I worked at the hardest, most endless labor.

As your grandmother mentioned, we attempted to grow grain, but there was no harvest because such grains don't grow well in our area. We dug up the soil, hauled away big stones, carried fertilizer, and did many other things with few tools and empty stomachs. The years of nationwide famine ended with the birth of my first son, who luckily avoided death by starvation. Hundreds died during the period, including my father, though he did not die of starvation.

Communal livestock were eventually distributed to each family based on the number of family members. Our family obtained three cows - two for Lhamo and me, and the other one was for our sons. We took excellent care of those cows because five lives depended on it. At first, I was constantly afraid that my cows would be attacked by wolves or stolen by bandits. Fortunately, however, they were not, and my family soon had enough food so that we no longer struggled with starvation.

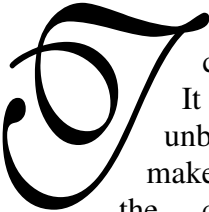
Because of such miserable experiences I've never wasted food in memory of how one mouthful of food could save a dying person.

Two men of the Hdzanggur Tribe in their encampment near the Yellow River opposite Radja Gomba (JFRock, <http://www.onshadow.com/>).



6

GRANDMOTHER'S FATHERLESS BOYS

 here were many fatherless children in the community. It is an awful sin to kill an unborn child. People liked to make various rumors about who the children's fathers were. Grandmother's parents thought that the birth of Grandmother's first son shamed the family because it destroyed Grandmother's marriage with an outstanding man, and encouraged rumor and discrimination from villagers. But Grandmother, herself, never considered it an embarrassment.

JAMPA: GRANDMOTHER'S FIRST SON

Grandmother thought that her first son, Jampa, was outlandish. She told me that Jampa's father was a well-known *chopa* who had the power to exorcise demons that harmed humans. He was frequently invited

to do rituals in local homes and received much respect.

Jampa's extraordinary behavior often astonished others, which was related to Jampa's father's character. Jampa was keenly interested in religious instruments from the time he was still crawling on his hands and knees. He would clutch Grandmother's prayer beads whenever he was in her arms, and murmur incomprehensibly, as if he were a great lama. He was thin and weak because he never ate meat. Whenever Grandmother chewed a bit of meat and put it in Jampa's mouth, he spat it out. At the age of seven, Jampa got sick and stayed ill for almost half a year. A lama reputed to be a good doctor was invited, but it was all in vain. Medicinal herbs and chanting lacked any curative effect.

A more prestigious lama from an adjacent village was then asked to help. When he first stepped into Grandmother's home and beheld Jampa's face, he was shocked and exclaimed, "What a pure child you have contaminated!" After divination he ascertained that the child had become ill

by walking under a woman's scarlet kerchief.

Grandmother immediately recalled a red scarf under her pillow that she had received as a present from her neighbor, a widow. She snatched the kerchief from under her pillow, hid it under a small round basin, and returned to the lama. That ill-omened object was then destroyed according to the great lama's instruction and chanting. Subsequently, Jampa recovered.

When Uncle Jampa was six years old, a famous abbot from a distant monastery came and said he could see a future in which Uncle Jampa was a high lama in our village. This seemed to be a wonderful opportunity for Uncle Jampa, but Grandmother didn't approve on the basis that he was too young to be a monk and it would be better for the family if he stayed at home. Uncle Jampa, however, soon decided to do as he liked. Grandmother wasn't surprised and didn't complain because she had once dreamed of him in red clothing sitting on a large, decorated throne before thousands of monks and nuns.

This vision convinced her of his future. However, for Uncle Jampa, there

were no monasteries near the village where he could stay. Worse, no one lived nearby who could teach him the sacred Buddhist scriptures or the Tibetan alphabet. Uncle Jampa had no scripture books and was illiterate. All he knew was the Six Sacred Symbols that he had learned from his parents. He also had a string of prayer beads and monk clothing that an uncle had given him. Wearing a monk's red clothes was all he could do at that time to identify as a monk, but he never complained, and his strong desire to be a monk never wavered. He was an illiterate monk on the outside, but he was always a true monk within his heart.

Years passed with him wrapped in his patched cassock. Because of his goodness and piety, the Three Jewels finally gave him a chance to realize his dream. Once there was more freedom in terms of religious practices, villagers began to pool their financial and material resources to establish their own temple, and then invited great lamas from monasteries to give teachings and chant. Uncle Jampa was in the first group of fewer than fifty

local monks at the beginning in this newly built temple.

Fortunately, Uncle became an assistant to a well-known lama, who taught him everything he knew. With this knowledge, Uncle Jampa utterly devoted himself to his belief. He was invited by villagers to chant and give instruction at almost every local ritual.

Grandmother said that Jampa hardly ever went to cities and towns, though important religious rituals and renowned lamas gave teachings there. Every time I visited him, I noticed a small bruise in the center of his forehead, which was the result of his hitting his forehead on the hard ground countless times during his daily prostrations. Every summer, he meditated for a period in his wooden bungalow on the edge of a mountain. During winter, he came home for Losar 'Tibetan New Year' and then returned to the monastery a couple of days later.

Grandmother's dream came true - Uncle Jampa became a great lama in our community and, as his hair grays, he completely devotes himself to his daily

religious activities and rarely leaves his home.

SANGGYAM: GRANDMOTHER'S SECOND SON

Sanggyam is Grandmother's second fatherless son who married Uncle Jamyang's wife. His father was from the nearby Yesang Tribe which, years ago, was known for its many livestock. Grandmother said that she never saw Sanggyam's father after he was arrested and taken away with the others. His family was told that he had died in prison in the second year after his arrest. Nobody really knows what happened to him.

A man without a blood father's love and care, Uncle Sanggyam is stubborn, independent, and inflexible. Since he was a young boy, he didn't like to play with other children. When Grandmother urged him to get along with the other boys, he would sneak off to the mountains to find Grandfather who was herding there, stay with him, and listen to his folktales.

One early morning Grandmother was returning from milking. She saw Uncle

Sanggyam urinating outside the tent on an anthill. She warned him not to do it again. She explained that it was a sin to kill any sentient being and then went into the tent to churn. When she came out later, Sanggyam was stamping his feet on that anthill with an excited expression. Infuriated by such disobedience, Grandmother grabbed Sanggyam by the hair, jerked him into the tent, and slapped his cheeks. He mopped his tears with his right sleeve, dashed out of the tent with a cry, and vanished into a valley opposite the tent entrance. Grandmother ignored him, assuming he would find Grandfather and complain.

That afternoon, Grandfather returned from herding without Sanggyam, and said he hadn't seen him the whole day. They were anxious, and Grandmother regretted having beaten him. They asked some relatives to help search for Sanggyam in the mountains where Grandfather herded. They searched for hours but found no trace of him, and then looked in the valleys. Eventually they found him sleeping by a stream. They called his name many times but he could not be roused. They then carried him home, put him by the hearth in

the tent, and waited. Sanggyam woke up after a couple of hours, but couldn't speak.

There were examples in the local community of what might happen if you slept on the mountains and in the valleys during the daytime. Not long before Uncle Sanggyam became mute, a sixteen year old girl went mad after napping on a mountain, and a young shepherd never awoke after falling asleep in a valley. Another story told of a man who lost the use of his right leg the day after he peed in a stream. Though we can't explain such mysteries using scientific theories, religious rituals cure such sickness in some cases.

After Grandmother and others realized that Uncle couldn't speak, they invited lamas and all the monks they could find from nearby monasteries. A great lama conducted *labo*, a religious ritual to call one's spirit back. He explained that Uncle Sanggyam had slept in a specific area in the valley known for its evils and that these evils had stolen his soul.

He commented further that if Uncle Sanggyam, had lacked a strong desire to live, he would never have regained consciousness. He said, "This is one reason

we never prostrate to mountain deities and water deities. Instead, we offer food and incense. Only religious ritual can help Sanggyam. Offering good food to the deities appeases them and chanting mantras calls the wandering soul back."

The monks chanted constantly day and night. His family offered fresh food to the local deities every morning. The great lama performed *labo*, called Uncle's name loudly, and said, "Good clothes and food are right here in his own home. Please return to your home!" He repeated this many times every afternoon.

The morning of the seventh day of the ritual, he beat Uncle Sanggyam's back three times with his thick, hard scripture book. Uncle coughed. A moment later he could speak normally.

Everyone was delighted when they confirmed Sanggyam could speak as well as before. Grandmother asked him what had happened after he rushed to that valley, but he couldn't remember much. He had forgotten Grandmother had beaten him and that he had fled to the valley.

The great lama said, "It's probably best Sanggyam has forgotten what happened during those days."

Grandmother never asked Sanggyam again what had made him mute, and she never beat him again. She understood that she had nearly lost her son because of her bad temper.

Afterwards, Uncle Sanggyam felt free to do whatever he liked. Grandmother no longer forced him to get along with others. Without a single friend to play with, you might think that Sanggyam's life was dull and unhappy but the reality was quite the opposite because Sanggyam developed a great interest in music.

When he was thirteen, he went to a traditional wedding with Grandmother. The guests eagerly asked Grandmother to sing, because her melodious voice had moved them many times in the past, which Sanggyam knew nothing about. He was astonished when everyone applauded cheerfully after Grandmother sang a song. Immediately interested in singing, he decided to learn as much as he could. With Grandmother's help, he learned many folk songs with meaningful lyrics. At another

wedding he surprised everyone with his euphonic voice, won a good reputation as a singer, and thoroughly enjoyed himself.

This was not enough to satisfy his great interest in music, however, and he continued attending weddings, where he learned to sing in an antiphonal style. Afterwards, nearly every local family who held a wedding invited Uncle Sanggyam.

A rich family invited him to their home one winter day for a wedding. They lived near the Yellow River, which was frozen so people could walk across the ice. Uncle Sanggyam accepted the invitation. From that experience he was exposed to a very different wedding form and songs than those he had experienced before. When he asked where they had learned such amazing songs, they showed him a radio. Uncle didn't believe songs could come from such a box until they turned it on and it emitted a Tibetan song. Strongly attracted by this magic box, he said he hoped to own such a magic box and offered his new sheep-skin robe for the radio. The family said that he was their important guest and that they should give radio to him as a gift. This cheered Uncle.

When he returned home with this magic box, everyone was astounded. He learned many different songs from the radio and performed them for locals on special occasions that made him a well-known singer. In time, he learned how to play the flute, harmonica, and mandolin. This further promoted his reputation and status among locals. Youths admired him and asked him to teach them. Nevertheless, his family worried about his future. He was already at marriageable age, but remained unmarried until Grandmother asked him to marry his uncle's wife as a family duty. Uncle then married a woman who was much older than he.

Afterwards, he no longer pursued music because he had to raise three stepchildren and, eventually, his own daughter. Life became challenging but he managed to overcome all these obstacles and became relatively wealthy.

After decades of struggling for a better life, Sanggyam's family's condition was good enough to lead a life without fear of danger. Two of his stepsons became monks. The third stepson married a local woman who then moved into Uncle's home.

My father arranged a marriage between an official and Sanggyam's daughter, who then moved to Pema County Town.

Unfortunately, misfortunes, one after another, soon befell Uncle. First, his daughter divorced after her husband heard rumors that she had maintained contact with an old lover. She then moved back to her own home and lived with her parents. The second year after her return, she died while delivering a daughter, who was sent to one of Uncle's cousin's families to raise.

She had two sons and wanted a daughter. This was because two of Uncle's last stepson's babies had died. A well-known lama said it was possibly wrong for children to reach maturity in his family. This is why Uncle gave his grandchild to his cousin to raise.

Uncle's oldest stepson was a monk studying with Uncle Jampa in a local monastery. He decided to secretly go to India. After some years there, he left for America, found a job as a trucker, and married a Tibetan woman. He came back to visit his relations twice and then returned to the USA. Uncle Sanggyam's second stepson

also changed his monk clothes for those of a layman and married a local woman. Uncle Sanggyam kindly built them a house near his own home, and gave them cash and livestock.

Uncle was not defeated by any of these challenges. On the contrary he pursued a modern comfortable life, while also retaining the good things of traditional life. Though he was interested in Tibetan folktales, the time had come when few children wanted to listen to them.

One day a new family came to our community. Nearly every evening, they showed a black and white movie on a white square cloth to local children. The family said that they wanted to get on well with other community members and generously invited them to watch, too. Elders were shocked by the violence of the films and disliked them, but the children were soon addicted. They thought the Japanese were demons and that Chinese were always in the right. Afterwards, no child was interested in folktales. Instead, they acted out what they had seen in the films. When the children were sleeping at night, they

spoke unconsciously, imitating the stars in the films.

Months later, that family left because they couldn't bear the noise and crowd at their home every evening. Then, to everyone's surprise, a local businessman brought a TV with a VCD player to his home. In order to attract more children and earn more money, he showed a movie for free the first two days. Later, he charged one *yuan* to whoever wanted to watch his color videos. He never showed a short movie without first playing a long selection from a drama series such as *Journey to the West*. This attracted children even more, who constantly worried about finding the one *yuan* to watch TV the next evening.

One day, while in Ngawa County Town, Uncle Sanggyam went into a small shop that sold VCDs and discovered some Tibetan folktales retold by a famous Tibetan lecturer. He bought these disks, a TV, a VCD player, and an old electric generator. Local children were delighted when Uncle returned with these purchases, thinking they could watch more exciting movies for free. When Uncle played these folktales, the children thought it was utterly


boring to watch a man sitting with a child and talking about things that they already knew or were familiar with. They were interested in novelty and excitement that featured in what the businessman showed. They preferred paying him rather than watching folktales for free at Uncle's home.

Uncle Sanggyam watched the folktales at home alone. After finishing them all, he concluded what he had bought was useless because local children weren't interested. He then sold what he had bought to a local man who used it to earn money.

In 2010, I visited Uncle Sanggyam's home during Losar. By this time, every local family had received a solar powered TV from the government. Uncle and his oldest grandson often struggled over the TV remote control. I heard nothing about folktales at that home even from Uncle, who once had been so passionate about them and had even tried to preserve them.

7

AUNTS

randmother had seven sons and two daughters, who grew up with few hardships and obstacles. Their life experiences are very similar, and typify our community residents of the same age. Their life, compared to their parents', was easier and happier. They didn't experience starvation, terrible forced labor, and relatively few restrictions on their religious beliefs.

SUNGRE: GRANDMOTHER'S FIRST DAUGHTER

Sungre, the first daughter, had a pretty face and a sweet voice like her mother's and her second brother's. She herded in the mountains everyday, beginning when she was fourteen. When young men sang love songs from the other side of the valleys or

mountains, she immediately replied if she appreciated the singer, which gave her many opportunities to meet strangers from nearby communities. She was considered rather traditional, and famed for her beauty and her love songs. Many young men wanted to marry her.

Aunt Sungre, however, was interested in none of them. Instead, she lost her heart to a man from another village. Uncle Lodro, Grandmother's youngest son, told me this story when I asked about Aunt Sungre's first love:

Tsedor was Sungre's first love. He was a well-known singer and also a well-known pauper. He was from Tralu Village, which now belongs to Gyurtang Township Town. After hearing of Sungre's beauty and lovely voice, Tsedor crossed three high mountains each day to see if Sungre was herding in the mountains and, if she was, he sang love songs to her from opposite of where she was herding.

At first, Sungre ignored him because she thought he was just like the other men who pursued her. Eventually, however, she realized this outsider came everyday to see her and to sing to her. She then grew interested and replied to his songs. They sent messages by singing and, in this way, established very intimate feelings for each

other. They began secretly meeting in the mountains, which led to intense affection. They were deeply in love and felt they couldn't live without each other. This relationship was considered a huge mistake by locals and especially by Sungre's family.

Unlike the present, parents were at that time responsible for their children's marriage and arranged everything for them. The children had no right to choose a spouse. Consequently, when my family and our acquaintances discovered Sungre's clandestine meetings with Tsedor, we hinted at our dissatisfaction, but she pretended to not understand and continued seeing him. This truly annoyed Father, who absolutely opposed the marriage. He ordered her to stop seeing Tsedor, told her to stop herding, and then assigned her brother, Gupe, to do the herding.

Sister Sungre and her lover then lost contact for many days until Tsedor visited my family one day with several head of livestock and a bottle of barley liquor wrapped in a white scarf. He was accompanied by four or five men who were his uncles and other relatives. With these traditional presents, their objective was very explicit, worrying my parents. Nevertheless, we greeted them with kind hospitality and patiently listened. The conversation became more formal and their tone grew more serious. Eventually, they explained that Tsedor and Sungre were

deeply in love and that we should not oppose them. They added that they came in great respect in order to arrange a marriage between Sungre and Tsedor, and hoped we would not reject the proposal.

However, my parents were unhappy. Tsedor and his family didn't know that Father had stopped Sungre from meeting Tsedor and thought we would happily consent to the marriage. To their surprise, my parents politely refused their proposal by saying that Sungre was already engaged to a man from our community. They added that they felt sorry for Tsedor. He and his companions were depressed and left.

Father felt sorry for Sungre who was weeping in Mother's arms. After being comforted by Mother and her own friends, she calmed down. Mother then explained why Father had refused to allow Tsedor to marry her:

It is because of Tsedor's identity and his tribe. Years ago, Tsedor's tribe, Tralu, and our tribe had conflict over land. Men from both sides fought each other, which led to many deaths, including one of your father's cousins. Don't blame your father. It's understandable that he can't forget an old grudge and give his daughter to his old enemy. He just can't let go of that old grudge.

Sungre understood Father's anguish and forgave him. She then told Mother she

was three-months pregnant and that Tsedor was the father of the unborn baby. Father was stunned and regretted his decision, which meant an innocent baby would soon become a fatherless child. There was nothing that could be done but accept the fact. A baby was born six months later. My parents felt responsible and cared for him.

Two years after the birth of her son, Aunt Sungre married a plump man from our community and moved to his home. Her fatherless son, Sonam, was kept in her natal home by our parents, who worried that their grandson would be bullied if he moved to another home. Aunt Sungre delivered three more sons and two daughters, and lived very happily.

In 2012, Sonam married a widow who was in her mid-thirties. When Aunt Sungre asked Sonam not to marry her, she was astonished by his reply:

Lhadron, my prospective wife, is pregnant with my baby. I'm responsible. I truly know the feeling a fatherless child has, which is what you gave me. I'll marry her despite her age and condition. I don't want to have another fatherless child in this family. I want to be a responsible father, unlike my own.

Aunt Sungre was rendered speechless. She considered this her karma.

KARKHO: GRANDMOTHER'S SECOND DAUGHTER

Karkho is Grandmother's second daughter. One chilly winter day in 2001, my family attended and celebrated Aunt Karkho's wedding, which was the only wedding ceremony her family had celebrated for many years. Due to the exorbitant expenses, complex preparation work required for a traditional wedding ceremony, and the large number of their children, my grandparents could only afford to hold one grand wedding ceremony.

My grandparents thought that because Karkho was their youngest daughter, they should give her this honor instead of Sungre, her older sister. But the true reason was the groom - a young well-known descendant of a great mahāsiddha, Drupchen sanggye gyeltso, who was said to be one of the Eighty Tibetan mahāsiddhas renowned for his ability to cure difficult diseases. As a result, all his descendants inherited special skills from him. At the

wedding, our family members and the attendants warmly greeted the groom and his entourage, and celebrated a grand wedding of royal dimensions. It was so spectacular that many villagers continue to mention it when they meet at weddings.

The next day, the groom and his entourage returned to their village with Aunt Karkho mounted on a brown horse with a white blaze on its forehead. Father said that they were leaving for Jonang Monastery. The groom's family had built a home for the new couple near the monastery. Fortunately this monastery had to be passed when we were returning home, thus we visited Aunt Karkho's new home. It was very cozy and the couple was living in complete harmony. During Losar of that year, my family visited my grandparents. Aunt Karkho and her husband were also there, as well as an infant, who was meeting his grandparents for the first time.

I didn't see Aunt Karkho's family for two years. Then one afternoon after a day of classes at school, I entered my family yard, and found a little boy fiddling with my broken bicycle. I realized that guests had come to my home. Not

recognizing the boy, I entered my home and was surprised to find Aunt Karkho and her husband sitting on a sofa. I was fond of Aunt Karkho because she had taken care of me when I was still unable to walk.

Father asked Uncle Lhundrup, Aunt's husband, to knot a precious amulet from his hair for me. I was shocked when he jerked three hairs from his head and swallowed them with a mouthful of liquor. Five minutes later, he spat out an amulet made of knotted hair and said that it would protect me from danger and disease. I was utterly convinced, and still wear it.

Their conversation told me that Aunt's family was moving to Gade County Town. I supposed I wouldn't see them for many years, but we are often surprised. While people were busy digging caterpillar fungus and selling them, my school gave us one month to assist our families in collecting caterpillar fungus. This is the most important period each year for local people to earn a sizable portion of their annual income. My parents sent me to my grandparents' pastureland. It was during that time I saw Aunt Karkho again. Her son was now quite a mischievous boy, who was

respected by locals because of his father's reputation.

Afterward, I learned that Lhundrup had abandoned his family for another woman. With nowhere to go, Aunt Karkho and her son moved back to her natal home. Men like Lhundrup commonly leave their families, following in the footsteps of the forefathers, who did the same. I pitied Aunt Karkho and her son but never showed it. I pretended everything was normal.

Two years later, I heard Aunt had delivered a fatherless son, which both pleased and upset me. I was pleased she had found a happier life in some way, but was also upset because the new fatherless boy would grow up in a fatherless family. I also felt sorry for my grandparents, who were spending half of their later lifetime carrying for their three fatherless grandsons.

8

UNCLE GYELTSSEN

Uncle Gyeltsen plays an exemplary role in his large family, exercising great generosity and compassion. Nevertheless, he is incredibly stubborn. He never listens to others' sentiments and advice, except for my father. Uncle Gyeltsen respects and envies him. Father is the only one who received higher education and thus has more knowledge and modern experiences than any of our other family members. For me, Uncle Gyeltsen is the gentlest and the most generous man I've ever known. He is always cautious about his movements and speech, because he doesn't want to unintentionally hurt others.

Due to various circumstances, my grandparents couldn't provide a grand wedding for Uncle Gyeltsen but, according to local custom, a fine horse had to be given to the bride's brother. Even a small

celebratory feast was out of the question. But they did consult a renowned lama for an auspicious day to bring the bride to their home, and invite some monks to chant scripture in the hope of the couple having a happy life. It was the process every family in our community followed. Every sort of religious ritual was the same, except for the mantras that the monks chanted.

At first, my grandparents were not very happy with the marriage, but their disapproval quickly melted away when the bride brought twenty cows and two horses from her natal home on the wedding day. The livestock were property given by her family and relatives. In contrast, Uncle Gyeltsen received only three cows from his paternal grandfather and two other important relatives. Aunt Wangmo complained about this whenever they quarreled. No one dared argue with her on this point because they were all aware that she had substantially improved the family's circumstances and worked hard for this large family.

For the first two years, Grandparents and Aunt Wangmo got on extremely well and the family was happy

and harmonious. However, life is unpredictable. One summer night Grandmother accidentally noticed that her sixth son, Uncle Gupe, was murmuring with Wangmo under the same Tibetan robe in their tent. Uncle Gyeltsen had gone to trade sheep with some wealthy businessmen from Tarkha Township Town, which is two mountain ranges away from our summer pastureland. Grandmother was shocked at discovering this embarrassing circumstance, but managed to control her feelings and said nothing and behaved as if she had seen nothing. Wangmo and her lover were confident that they had not been discovered.

The next day, Grandmother informed Grandfather, who was not particularly surprised, but exasperated and disappointed with his daughter-in-law. He had heard rumors about some man stealing his brother's wife. Perhaps this was why Grandfather faced the problem calmly and thought of a perfect plan. He separated Gyeltsen and his wife from the family by building a new house near the large yak dung enclosure in their winter pasture. Livestock and property were also given to Uncle Gyeltsen's new family. Grandfather

then found a pretty wife for Uncle Gupe. The new bride was from another village and was also an only child. Consequently, Uncle Gupe moved to the bride's home.

Grandfather's plans thus appeared to be successful. Disaster, which could have been like artillery fire, destroying the family, was avoided. No one but my grandparents understood why these events took place at that time.

GANGCHENTSO FALLS FROM HER RIDING YAK AND IS TERRIBLY INJURED

Two years after establishing his own family, Uncle Gyeltsen's only child, Gangchentso, is a great singer of folksongs and the same age as my sister. With the birth of the child, Uncle Gyeltsen's family became more harmonious and his life was more meaningful than before. Uncle often claims that a family without a child is incomplete and if a child has no parents, it means no family. Thus, he was devoted to his family and his daughter. At the age of thirteen, Gangchentso had a riding accident. While mounted on her usual herding yak, she drove the other yaks to the mountains.

Her cousin, after losing a small game of who'll be the rider, was reluctantly leading the rope of Gangchentso's herding yak.

They were suddenly attacked by a huge wolf. The frightened yaks scattered. Gangchentso's riding yak chased after the other yaks. Gangchentso's piercing screams spread everywhere, as if she was the wolf. She couldn't think of anything to do but scream. When the yak made a sudden jump, she flew off its back. Her head hit the ground hard.

When she regained consciousness, she was in her father's arms. From that day on, she had frequent headaches that traditional medicines and religious ritual failed to cure. Uncle Gyeltsen eventually took her to a large hospital in Chengdu City, where he was told that she needed a skull operation that required a large amount of money. Uncle Gyeltsen borrowed from whoever would lend him money, but it was not enough. He then decided to sell livestock to some Muslims, who would slaughter the animals and sell the meat for more cash. *Shetsong* is the name for this in our community. Those who engage in it are considered serious sinners and receive little

respect from locals. However, Uncle Gyeltsen was an exception because everybody knew that he had to commit this terrible sin in order to save his daughter's life. Consequently, villagers not only did not criticize Uncle Gyeltsen, but they admired his sense of responsibility.

"I brought a healthy child into this world and I ought to give her a good life. It is a father's responsibility," Uncle Gyeltsen said when his acquaintances suggested that his daughter's headaches were a minor problem not worth much expense. He also added that his most important duty in this life was to create an excellent future for his daughter.

Uncle Gyeltsen collected the needed sum and his daughter's operation was successful. She no longer suffered unbearable headaches.

Though Uncle Gyeltsen's daughter recovered, setbacks never end. Trouble ensued with his brother's return.

UNCLE GUPE RESUMES HIS LOVE AFFAIR WITH HIS BROTHER'S WIFE

After three years at his wife's home, Uncle Gupe, who had been Uncle Gyeltsen's wife's secret lover, left his wife and returned to his natal home. He only stated that he had had a fierce disagreement with his parents-in-law. This put his wife in a dilemma. She didn't know if she should go with her husband or stay at home. Later, the two families negotiated over Uncle Gupe's departure, for which the wife's family demanded excessive compensation. They failed, however, because during the process of negotiation it was revealed that Gupe's wife's lover had paid her nocturnal visits when Gupe was absent and, to make things worse, her parents had known about it.

Uncle Gupe had wanted to bring many caterpillar fungus diggers to his wife's home place and charge each 2,000 RMB for the right to dig on their pastureland. This would have brought in a good sum of money, but his parents-in-law reproached him on the grounds that it would kill many creatures that lived in the soil and infuriate the mountain deities.

Gupe's purpose was to save the family from a financial crisis. He then realized he had no real power in the family. When he learned his wife was sleeping with a stranger, he returned to his own home without giving a reason. Maybe it was his karma for sleeping with Uncle Gyeltsen's wife.

Everyone thought it was understandable for Gupe to leave and my grandparents did not complain. On the contrary, they felt guilty for finding him such an unreliable wife. They greeted him happily, but they knew that one of their old worries had come again.

Uncle Gyeltsen had no idea about his wife and brother's earlier affair. However, his brother confessed everything, and resumed his relationship with Uncle Gyeltsen's wife. To our surprise, Uncle Gyeltsen showed no resentment. The two brothers shared one wife, though Gupe did not live in Uncle Gyeltsen's home. It seemed Uncle Gyeltsen did not mind.

A decade later, however, conflicts and arguments between Uncle Gyeltsen and his wife surfaced. He was convinced not to

divorce twice, which earned him great respect from his relatives.

When his only child married a local man, Uncle Gyeltsen held the biggest wedding that had ever been celebrated in our community. Gangchentso was decorated with much precious jewelry and was the prettiest bride. The groom moved into Uncle Gyeltsen's home after the wedding and Uncle Gyeltsen soon had his first grandson, which brought peace to the family for a short period. However, a third cold war soon ensued between him and his wife. This time no one could convince him besides my father, who succeeded in postponing a divorce. Meanwhile, Uncle Gyeltsen found a lover in a different community and spent time with her whenever he had rows with his wife.

UNCLE GYELTSEN FINDS A LOVER AND A NEW LIFE

Uncle and his lover, Dadron, were both in their fifties. Dadron's husband was an inveterate gambler who abandoned her after running up huge gambling debts. After her husband fled, his debtors barged their way

into Dadron's home and took whatever they could find of value. They also took her livestock. She also still owed men who didn't take anything from her. Not long after Uncle Gyeltsen delayed divorcing his wife, he learned that Dadron was pregnant. When he was asked to take responsibility for that child, Uncle Gyeltsen left his home quietly without taking so much as a needle.

Everyone understood that he had spent his entire life trying to improve his family's condition, and that he had left all the property that he had accumulated during his life. He said he was leaving everything for his family members, including his brother, hoping Gupe would prevent the family from breaking up, or maybe he didn't want his son-in-law to take everything.

Uncle Gyeltsen moved into Dadron's home, knowing it was another difficult beginning. Many loans were waiting to be paid. Months later, Dadron delivered a dead baby. The doctors said they could only save one life and added that it was not possible to have a healthy baby with a mother who was already in her

fifties. Uncle Gyeltsen chose his wife rather than an unseen baby.

At the beginning of this brand new life, Uncle Gyeltsen again had to engage in *shetsong*. He knew that he had little time left and that the only way to earn a lot of money in a short time was by selling livestock for slaughter. Uncle Gyeltsen ultimately managed to pay off the debts incurred by his wife's former husband - debts he was actually not required to pay.

As I mentioned before, Uncle Gyeltsen is compassionate and did this for his wife. Though some say Uncle just needed a companion to spend his late life with. However, when Uncle was in the hospital and chose his wife to live, we knew he cared about and needed her. People sympathize with Uncle Gyeltsen.


Golok resident, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-10-17-14
Foto: Schäfer, Ernst | 1993/11/39

9

FATHER

randmother said, "Your father is the only child who has absolutely requited my love and care," her eyes brimming with tears of contentment. I never saw a mother so proud of and satisfied with her child as Grandmother, and I felt a little ashamed of being less dutiful to my own mother.

Father is Grandfather's second son and Grandmother's fourth son. A relative who is a lama gave Father the name 'Sanggye' several days after his birth and explained that this name means 'Protected by The Three Jewels'. Father grew from a tractable baby into a naughty child who was fond of eating, thus earning the nickname Jasha 'Tea and Meat'. Grandmother realized Father loved meat when he enjoyed eating strips of raw meats moistened in milk tea

when he was only old enough to say only 'meat' 'tea'.

Whenever I asked Grandmother how naughty Father was in his childhood, she said, "Well, he never complained as long as his stomach was full."

I laugh every time I hear this, but Father is always somewhat embarrassed.

Fortunately, Father didn't experience the harsh famine that had tormented his parents. When he was born, his family no longer lacked food. Grandmother even offered Father a small wooden bowl of yak milk when he got up from under his father's sheepskin robe every day, which also made Father the fattest and strongest member of his family. All had to do before he was ten years old, was to play with his three older brothers who were his only playmates. When he was tired, he could sleep by the rectangular adobe stove as long as he liked.

Father's childhood was simple and comfortable, and reminded my grandparents of the peaceful life that had been taken away from them many years earlier.

FATHER GOES TO SCHOOL

When the local communes built a small school of three grades, Grandmother's second brother was hired as the only Tibetan language teacher in that school. He eventually suggested that my grandparents send one of their sons to school in order for him to eventually have an official job. My grandparents then chose Father without hesitation because he was the cleverest among their sons and was not very good at home chores. He was also Grandmother's favorite child and she definitely wanted him to have a better life. Thus, Father, at ten years of age, became the first child in our village to receive a formal education in that school. His journey along the road of education had just begun.

Father was happy with his school life that was utterly dissimilar from that of his siblings and other children in his community. At that time, the school Father attended was on the right side of a narrow, dirt road that divided Yartang Township Town into two sections. The road was so narrow that hardly one vehicle could pass.

If two vehicles met, one was obliged to stop in order not to collide with the other.

On the left side of that winding road was the local government center that had been reestablished and renamed during revolutionary times. This was also the site where the commune site had been located during the period of horrible famine. A dozen or more families lived around the government building, which had a sod roof above wood slabs that were laid across two walls. Most of these families had members who worked in government. The other side was mostly occupied by the school. The spare area there was only large enough to accommodate the school.

A big river ran some kilometers from the school - the Machu. Rumor said that many drowned in that river during revolutionary times. Local ghost stories were so frightening that nobody dared live near the river.

Though the school had only three lines of detached rooms at that time, the buildings occupied a huge compound. It seemed a great architect had seriously considered the future extension of the school. Father said he was astounded by the

dreariness of the school when Grandfather first led him through the school wooden gate. Father said:

It was totally different from what I had imagined the night before I went to school. Commonly, each of the three lines of flimsy buildings had four detached rooms, except for the one in the rear that featured only three rooms. One wall in the middle had been pulled down to make a space large enough to accommodate a dining room for both teachers and students.

Two women cooked in another room in that line of buildings and the last room was for storing yak dung and wood. It was also a secret place for boys to smoke unfinished cigarettes they found in teachers' trash bins and in the school toilet. The other two lines of buildings were the classroom and dormitory building for both teachers and students. We slept on the ground because we had no beds in the dormitory. There were few students so we weren't crowded in our sleeping room, but there were frequent conflicts over the best and driest place to sleep.

In my second year at school, I luckily avoided sleeping there because Uncle became the school headmaster and had his own house in the schoolyard. I then slept there.

After Father finished Fourth Grade, he planned to return home and help his parents. However, Uncle arranged for him to go to the County Town to further his education. By that time, Father's uncle had been promoted and become headmaster of the county junior middle school in the county town. He thus had the authority to admit Father to his school.

Grandmother was not very pleased, thinking she would not see her son often. On the other hand, Grandfather supported Father, believing that education was good for everyone.

Father stayed in middle school for another three years and only returned home a few weeks in winter and when the spring semester ended in summer. Mounting the best horse his family had, Grandfather came to the County Town several days before Father finished his final examinations and then brought him back home.

FATHER BECOMES A TEACHER

After finishing middle school the government gave an examination to the graduates to choose the best qualified

graduates to teach primary school in the township towns with full salaries. Father was always the best student in his class because he had the strictest supervisor - Uncle. As anticipated, Father became an official teacher in his hometown school where his own education had begun.

Father worked hard. He taught all the subjects in all grades and was also the school physician. He gave medicines when the children got colds and fevers. Though he had never taken medical courses, he was the only one who can read Chinese characters at the school. Therefore, he was responsible for dispensing medicine after reading the instructions on the medicine packages.

Father's monthly salary meant his family's condition improved, but he was not wealthy considering the many family members. This changed when he married Mother, who is from the richest family in our community. This marriage made Father's family richer.


When I was five, Father got his first promotion and moved to Dogongma Township Town, where he was a primary school headmaster. Dogongma Township

Town was near Pema County Town. A deep narrow stream divides these two administrative divisions.

After our transfer, my parents frequently sent new clothes and food to my grandparents. Grandmother told me how generous Father was after he got his job. She had imagined that Father might not care about them after he had a relatively luxurious life and his own family.

Later, when I was in primary school, Father was also sent to Ziling and Lanzhou for further education. It was during this time that he learned Standard Chinese.

EPILOGUE

ew written materials, particularly in English, deal with ordinary Tibetan families over several generations. I have narrated a story of a typical Tibetan nomad family, their experiences in the last several decades, and some of the dramatic changes they have experienced over four generations.

This is only a brief introduction to my paternal relatives. The story of my maternal relatives would be as vivid. This is a never-ending story, but I will end my story here - at least for the time being.

TIBETAN & CHINESE

A

Anhui 安徽

ashogkhashog, 'a shog kha shog འ་ཤོག་ཁ་ཤོག

B

barkham, 'bar khams འབར་ཁམས།

bumchu, 'bum chu འབུམ་ཅུ།

C

Chengdu 成都

cho, chos ཇོ་ཇོས།

Chongqing 重庆

chopa, gcod pa གཅོད་པ།

D

dadron, zla sgron ལྷ་སྟོན།

darlak, dar lag དར་ལག

dogongma, mdo gong ma མདོ་གོང་མ།

drokde, 'brog sde འབྲོག་སྡེ།

drolma, sgrol ma སྟོལ་མ།

drukchen, drug chen འུག་ཆེན།

drupchen sanggye gyeltso, grub chen sangs

rgyas rgyal mtsho གྲུབ་ཆེན་སངས་རྒྱལ་རྒྱལ་མཆོ།
dulung, gdud lung གདུང་ལུང་།

dumbusumtse, sdum bu sum tshes

སུམ་བུ་སུམ་ཆེས།

G

gade, dga' bde དགའ་བདེ།

gangchentso, gangs can mtso གངས་ཅན་མཆོ།

gantso, gangs mtso གངས་མཆོ།

golok, mgo log མགོ་ལོག་།

gorpa, sgor pa གོ་པ།

gupe, gu pe གུ་པེ།

gyeltsen, rgyal mtshan གུལ་མཆན།

gyurtang, 'gyur thang འགྱུར་ཐང་།

J

jampa, byams pa རྩམས་པ།

jamyang, 'jam g.yang འཇམ་གཡང་།

jasha, ja sha ཇ་ཤ།

Jiangsu 江苏

Jiefang 解放

jonang, jo nang ཇོ་ནང་།

K

karkhang, dkar khang དཀར་ཁང་།

karkho, dkar kho དཀར་ཁོ།

kome, sko me སྐོ་མེ།

L

labo, rla 'bod ལ་འབོད།

lama, bla ma ལ་མ།

lamkor, lam skor ལམ་སྐོར།

Lanzhou 兰州

lhadron, lha sgron ལ་སྒོན།

lhamo, lha mo ལ་མོ།

lhundrup, lhun 'grub ལུན་འབྲུབ།

lodro, blo gros ལྷོ་གྲོས།

losar, lo sar ལོ་སར།

machu, rma chu མ་ཅུ།

M

Mao 毛

migentranggo, mi rgan phrang mgo

མི་གན་ཕྱང་མགོ།

moba, mo ba མོ་བ།

N

nachak, mna' phyag མནའ་ཕྱག

nagormo, na gor mo ན་གོར་མོ།

ngangba, ngang ba ངང་བ།

ngawa, rnga ba ང་བ།

P

padmasambhava, slob dpon pad+ma 'byung

gnas སྒྲུབ་དཔོན་པདྨ་འབྱུང་གནས།

payul, pha yul པ་ཡུལ།

pelung, pad lung པད་ལུང་།

pema, pad ma པད་མ།

Q

Qinghai 青海

R

rapgye, rab rgyas རབ་རྒྱས།

relba, ral ba རལ་བ།

S

Salar, Sala 撒拉

sanggyam, sangs rgyam སངས་རྒྱས།

sanggye, sangs rgyas སངས་རྒྱས།

shesong, bshas tshong བཤས་ཚེང་།

socho, bsod chos བསོད་ཚེས།

sonam, bsod nams བསོད་ནམས།
sungrap, gsung rab གསུང་རབ།
sungre, gsung ras གསུང་རས།

T

tarka, ltar kha ལྟར་ཀཁ།
tralu, khra lu བླ་ལུ།
tsadram, tshwa 'gram རྩ་ལྷ་མོ།
tsampa, rtsam pa རྩམ་པ།
tsedor, tshe rdor རྩོད་རྩོ།
tsomo, mtso mo མཚོ་མོ།
tsongon, mtso sngon མཚོ་སྒོན།

W

wangckuk, dbang phyug དབང་ཕྱུག།
wangmo, dbang mo དབང་མོ།
wangpo, dbang po དབང་པོ།

X

Xining 西宁

Y

yartang, yar thang ཡར་ཐང།
yesang, g.yas sang གཡས་སང།
yorpo, yor po ཡོར་པོ།

Z

zayik, za yig ཟ་ཡིག
zhingle, zhing las ཞིང་ལས།
ziling, ziling ཟེ་ལིང་།

Golok residents, 1938 (Ernst Schäfer, German Federation Archives).



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